

Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*

Editorial Office 1710 Rhode Island Ave., N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C. Telephone NATIONAL 2066

VOL. VI, NO. 51, Issue Number 308, DECEMBER 21, 1949 ★ Editors: FELIX MORLEY & FRANK C. HANIGHEN

IN DEFENSE OF SANTA CLAUS

by Felix Morley

Quot homines, tot sententiae: so many men, so many opinions.

The lines were written by a Roman poet more than a century and a half before the birth of Christ. But they express the idea which led our first Congress to stipulate that neither it nor its successors shall make any law "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof". This stipulation, that diversity of opinion shall be recognized in matters of religious faith, is politically fundamental. For if authoritarian uniformity is made unconstitutional in the field most vital to human existence, it would certainly seem less likely to be tolerated by the people in smaller matters.

That, we know, was the reasoning of the men who wrote the First Amendment into the Constitution. There is, however, an obvious flaw in the logic when thus simply expressed. It assumes that there will be a universal religious faith, which when present should be allowed to express itself in different forms of observance. But if faith itself is lacking, the provision for a free exercise of religion may serve merely to augment spiritual inertia. And this in turn could come to mean that the political structure designed to develop liberty would in time serve to destroy its essence.

All the documents collected for the Freedom Train, in other words, can do nothing to secure the blessings of liberty unless the people themselves have the religious faith in which liberty has its source. Constitutional forms of themselves guarantee nothing. As Washington expressed it in his Farewell Address: "Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice?"

Christmas is certainly an appropriate time for consideration of this issue. And it has been posed, in timely, easily comprehended and decidedly provocative terms by a distinguished representative of a church that is sometimes itself accused of authoritarian leanings. Let us turn to the editorial page of The Catholic Review for December 16, which asserts bluntly that "Santa the Saint has been lost in Santa the Sugar Daddy".

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II

In launching this attack the Reverend John Sinnott Martin says specifically that he is not addressing the argument to "incurable sentimentalists". Unfortunately, that tends only to obscure the real character of the discussion, which is a matter of distinguishing truth from falsehood. This Father Martin himself makes clear, by calling Santa Claus an "unholy fraud".

In the course of the indictment presented under that title, it is asserted that: "Where Christian fact and commercialized fable are woven together, the rejection of one may often lead to the but half-hearted retention of the other." Brooding upon this statement we sought confirmation in what seemed an easy experiment -- a division of the inpouring Christmas cards into two categories, according to their primarily spiritual or primarily material nature. The division, we thought, would be merely a matter of noting whether holy day or holiday was uppermost in the artist's mind.

Since Christmas cards, as much as automobiles or radio programs, are in this country still designed to compete in a free market, it seemed that our informal poll should reflect public opinion on the significance of Christmas -- perhaps more accurately than any question that could be framed by Dr. Gallup. The type of card that sells best, whether or not "personalized" by printing the sender's name, should give some index to the thought of our people on the morning of Christ's Nativity.

Unfortunately, the test was a dismal failure. The very first card turned up was a home-made photograph of a distant family that is dear to us, and we knew not whether to place it in the spiritual or the material file. The second was an equally homespun drawing symbolizing what another friend hopes to accomplish in 1950 with his newspaper. The third card pictured a snowclad mountain; the fourth a burning candle. At that point our experiment folded.

What this unsuccessful inquiry would seem to indicate is that the mind of modern man is as confused, or "poured together", on the subject of Christmas, as on much else. Undoubtedly the spiritual values of this festival have been affected by material considerations. But the opposite is equally true. The material side of Christmas is also enlivened, is indeed redeemed, by values that at least approximate those for which Christ stood. And it is important to recall that those values have been transmitted to us through the media of different minds.

III

The story of the Nativity, as the case in point, is found only in two of the Gospels: Matthew and Luke. The former tells us of the Wise Men who presented material gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh. Luke, however, makes no mention of any gifts of a material nature, but emphasizes the spiritual admonition of the heavenly host: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

That an event as significant as the birth of Christ should have been ignored by Mark and John, told with an entirely different approach by Matthew and Luke, is not without bearing on the subjective value of Santa Claus. He could be an unholy fraud to some, but a personification of Christian attributes to others. Quot homines, tot sententiae.

In Witness to the Truth, her simple but deeply impressive study of "Christ and His Interpreters", Edith Hamilton devotes thoughtful attention to the variations, if not outright contradictions, in the Gospel stories. Her conclusion gives a subtle but deeply comforting meaning to the expression: "Gospel truth". In Miss Hamilton's words:

"It would be our immense loss if we had only one impeccable life of Christ, discrepancies all smoothed away, every part accurately fitted into the whole. The separate accounts, each with marked characteristics, prove as a single one never could that Christ lived and walked this earth, an actual personality. The differences are extraordinarily illuminating. Far from being a trouble, they are altogether an advantage. We have four accounts written from four separate points of view, but we have only one Christ. He is the same in them all."

To reconcile the diversity of men's thinking with the unity of Christ's teaching is perhaps the most difficult problem that can face a Christian people. And the American attempt to solve this problem, without the aid of an Established Church, has been one of the most notable co-operative endeavors in all recorded history. In that endeavor, Santa Claus plays an honorable part.

IV

Our complex celebration of Christmas, to which we all respond regardless of racial or religious background, is not merely a material splurge. It is a vital, if sometimes crude and fumbling, part of the effort of a heterogeneous people to achieve spiritual unity.

In this annual synthesis of values the pot-bellied Santa Claus with his jingling bell is far from being an "unholy fraud". As good a case can be made for considering him as a catalytic agent, who helps to bring a diversity of creatures together in a common meeting. Between the reindeer on the one hand, the ox and the ass on the other, there is not the feud that Father Martin seems to fear.

In his transition to the street-corner Santa Claus, jolly old Sankt Nikolaus has seemingly suffered corruption in more than name alone. He has been commercialized to an extent that must not infrequently revolt his soul. Nevertheless, under his false whiskers and padded midriff, St. Nicholas manages to maintain his original stature and function as the patron saint of children. It is perhaps because he boldly seeks the market place that St. Nicholas has filled the role assigned him with greater success than has been achieved by more ascetic saints.

And there is even something to be said for the idea that Santa Claus will remember good children only. If that is "bad psychology and bad pedagogy" then the same applies to the whole theory of rewards and punishments. It applies also to the concept of Heaven, and to that of Hell.

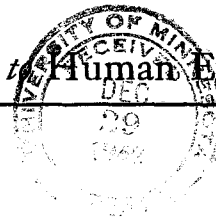
Between the infant Christ, as symbol of absolute innocence, and the patron saint of children, as symbol of adult concern for innocence, there is no incompatibility but rather a complementary relationship. It is of course true that "for Christians, Christmas without Christ is a blasphemy". But it is equally true that Christmas without the patron saint of children -- no matter how much he has been exploited -- would be a far less heartwarming and effective holy day.

If Christmas sales really mean nothing more than an annual spurt on the part of the economic mechanism, then the day we celebrate has certainly been degraded. The act of Christmas giving, however, is salutary. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And if that is the spirit which has kept the cash register ringing the past few weeks, it is not fairly subject to indictment as materialistic. A large commercial turnover no more indicates a dearth of the authentic Christmas spirit than grinding poverty would alone prove its presence.

The significance of Christmas must still be judged by subjective standards. It is a test -- a searching test -- of whether Christ has much or little significance to each and every one of us, as individuals. We are properly reminded that the manger is central in the authentic celebration of the day. But we may reasonably recall that, as the word itself tells us, a manger is a place to eat as well as a place to pray.

Father Martin concludes that "the modern and highly materialistic Christmas spirit" is taking us away from "the original and grace-giving spirit of Christ". That may be sadly true, but happily -- at least to us who have seen our actuarial share of Christmas celebrations -- it is not yet proven.

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By Frank C. Hanighen

December 21, 1949

POLITICAL NOTES: The recently sluggish scene of national politics quickened to something resembling life in the past week. For one thing, the Eisenhower-Truman incident breathed new vitality into political discussions, although -- so far as we can discover -- the exchange of amenities which closed the affair left many unconvinced that the General has no political ambitions. Those who have for some time maintained that he is "running for '52 as hard as he can" have not changed their views. And they further insist that the General, as previously reported in this column enjoys the encouragement of "Elder Statesman" Bernard M. Baruch, who is also on good terms with Mr. James F. Byrnes. The former Secretary of State a few weeks ago, in Mississippi, phrased the same fears about collectivism as had General Eisenhower. But has this movement advanced from the field of oratory to that of organization? On this point, even those seers who hopefully report its progress concede that the answer is "no".

The other development in the political scene has not reached the columns of the press. Indeed, it may never come to much; but it is worth noting as a symptom that the forces of conservatism are not entirely moribund. It is a boom-let for 1952, for Mr. Allen B. Kline. And who -- many will ask -- is Mr. Kline? He is the gentleman who hurled defiance last week at Secretary Brannan and his plan in the annual convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation. The "Farm Bureau" is the largest of American farm organizations, numbering about 1,400,000 members, or nearly one-third of the farmers of the nation. In Washington, it is saluted as the most powerful of the farm lobbies. Mr. Kline, last year President of the organization and again elected this year, rather conspicuously did not invite the Secretary of Agriculture to this year's convention. And when Mr. Brannan urged the Farm Bureau to hold a "free discussion" of his plan, Mr. Kline tartly replied that the farmers had sufficient knowledge of the scheme and did not like it. A few days later the convention unanimously repudiated the Brannan Plan and called it "nationalization of agriculture". This denunciation of the Brannan Plan by the Farm Bureau, it is believed, has killed its chances of passage at the coming session of Congress. No wonder, then, that not only in the corridors of the Farm Bureau's convention, but also among certain business interests, there circulated the idea of "Kline for '52". It should be added, Mr. Kline is a Republican.

A tribute to Kline, on the morrow of the convention, appeared in the often Fair Dealish Washington Post. That paper, editorially, referred to the re-election of Kline as head of the Farm Bureau, as a "vote for farm statesmanship", and went on, "Mr. Kline is a man of broad caliber -- one who is able, for example, to see beyond the mere price of cotton. He has shown a keen and progressive appreciation of the relationship of the farmer to the whole national economy..." Critics have insisted that the decrepit GOP needs some new faces. Mr. Kline's advocates may have released naught but a transient boom-let, but it is refreshing.

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BRANNAN PLAN: But, after all, it is significant that one must fumble among such adjectives as "doughty", "plucky", "defiant" to characterize the treatment which the Farm Bureau accorded the plan of the Secretary of Agriculture. While the convention voted unanimously to denounce the plan, observers wryly commented, "That's the organization, not the grass roots." As reported in this column last summer, we be-

lieve that the "perpetual motion" device -- it was so lampooned at the recent Gridiron Show -- has many potential backers among the farm folks. On our desk is the Country Almanac, edited by A. B. Genung in Freeville, New York containing a shrewd warning from a man who is both dirt farmer and commentator: "Our farm leaders are underestimating the Brannan Plan. We regard it as very likely to become the law of the land before 1952, unless there is a definite turn to the Right before then. The Brannan Plan is as logical as the soup department in a Tammany mission. It buys the farmers and does it in the most respectable and forthright way yet devised. It buys the housewives according to a formula perfected by those experts in vote appeal across the Atlantic, a formula that elects and elects. It is one of the cleverest implements of collectivist doctrine so far devised; takes from the haves that which they have and bestows same upon the have-nots. Or to phrase it after Mr. Truman's manner, it penalizes those sinful Special Interests, the taxpayers, in favor of more deserving pressure groups.

"The Brannan Plan doesn't piddle around the bush. It comes right out and gives the farmer an income befitting his station as the world's most efficient food producer and the nation's most strategically situated voting bloc. No folderol either about the third decimal place in some cost-of-living index; it just tells the delighted consumer: 'Hereafter a sizeable chunk of your food bill will be paid for by Uncle.' In fact, after the government gets through with about one more year of making butter, eggs, potatoes and now pork artificially high, consumers are going to demand something like the Brannan Plan in self-defense. . . .

"Is this or isn't it practical Belt-line politics (corn belt, wheat belt, cotton belt)? If you muff that one you'll never get a cum laude from the Pendergast school. Brannan built the thing to their specifications and they aren't amateurs. And despite the Sage of Springfield, you can fool a lot of the people a lot of the time. No, these folks who are writing off the Brannan Plan at this stage had better pause and re-consult the horoscope. We personally find our respect for Mr. Brannan's talents mounting. In this latter-day game of political counterfeiting, he stands out with a sort of Machiavellian eminence."

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MORE POLITICAL NOTES: The papers yesterday reported that the Administration is planning a big nation-wide campaign, to put over its political program during the coming session of Congress. We have no doubt that it will be well-financed and nicely orchestrated with balloons, "exclusive" newspaper feed-outs, Congressional tactics, etc. But what are the opposing forces going to do, in rebuttal? We mean the movement which Mr. James F. Byrnes tried to launch in Mississippi last month. The speech was well received -- and then silence. "Jimmy" was here for the Gridiron, and did some talking around. One of the things he reportedly expressed was a hope that some mid-western college or organization would invite him to make another speech. He wants to take his evangel out from under the Stars and Bars atmosphere of the first address, to give his appeal against collectivism and for states rights a broader, national scope. And he wouldn't mind dates in some northern state capitals; the bosoms of governors swell to such music as "states rights". Well, if the movement behind him were as well-financed and organized as some of its Leftist critics allege, it would long ere this have booked Jimmy from Columbus to Sacramento, including a stop-off in Omaha.

This Federal Capital also takes an interest, a rather skeptical interest, in the new organization of the Republican National Committee. Observers, even the most sympathetic ones, say grimly that the incoming command must produce some "bold, imaginative approach", some new and highly captivating phraseology, for it's getting awfully late. One fact is given much attention -- that the mid-westerners now at the helm have helped to build a foundation of mutual respect between leaders of ag-

riculture and leaders of business out in that area. They have been instrumental in preventing business from mortally offending the farmers by supporting the movement to fasten on the farmer the same fiscal handicaps suffered by business. We mean the abortive anti-farm co-operative drive of two years ago. These new helmsmen of the Party convinced business and farm leaders that the better course was to make a joint drive to reduce taxes in general. Whatever else they have in their till, the new GOP leaders have acquired this political capital.

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PARDON: In this Christmas time, we hope that the President will grant an amnesty to some 5,000 conscientious objectors. These men, because of their refusal to comply with selective service orders, have served their time in jail and are now at liberty. But liberty in this case is qualified, in many states, by deprivation of civil rights -- a permanent loss of the right to vote, to hold public office, to secure licenses to practise certain professions. In short, they remain in the same category as common criminals. It seems a cruel and odious classification for these young men, who chose to suffer in the name of conscience. The way to end this situation is a full, general, presidential pardon. Numerous public figures have petitioned the White House for such an action, and it has been pointed out that there are precedents. In the past, a number of our Chief Executives have taken this step of mercy and have selected Christmas Day as the occasion. President Roosevelt, for instance, cleaned the slate for World War I objectors on December 25, 1933. The continued punishment of those who took the same course in World War II can only be characterized as a vindictive policy. Surely, President Truman will see this and enter fully into the Christmas spirit by pardoning the conscientious objectors.

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KENNAN: The Kennan affair has set many tongues wagging in the Capital. The announcement that George F. Kennan is leaving the State Department is no small matter. Kennan is regarded as the chief architect of our policy of "containment" of Russia; and he earned the sobriquet of "Mr. X" when an article so authored appeared in Foreign Affairs explaining the containment policy. It is widely believed that Mr. Kennan wrote the piece. He has served as head of the State Department's Policy Planning Committee for the past three years and as such has presumably played a big role in shaping our foreign course. Now he is leaving the Department with the explanation that he wishes to do writing and academic work. He leaves Government work July 1st, 1950. It has been officially announced that his place will be taken by Mr. Paul Nitze after the first of the year; and that he will make a tour of Latin America and Africa for the Department in the following six months. The current comment on the latter fact is "shelved".

Mr. Kennan has offered no clue as to what precipitated his sudden desire to desert the Department for the academic grove. There are many versions offered here and there by this or that diplomatic correspondent. The most persuasive one which has reached our ears runs as follows: For some time, Mr. Kennan has found himself increasingly critical of what has been going on in the Department. He did not like certain personnel changes; he considered that Mr. Acheson had surrounded himself with men of mediocre and inadequate ability; he disliked the Department's policy on Mexican oil rights, etc. etc. But the most important reason, it is said, was a sharp conflict with the Secretary of State on the subject of Formosa. Mr. Acheson reportedly wants to leave that strategic island strictly alone to its fate. Mr. Kennan, it is claimed, recently became convinced that active steps -- military if necessary -- should be taken to keep Formosa out of the hands of the Chinese Communists. On this issue, many believe, Mr. Kennan apparently thought the Acheson course a policy of "appeasement", not of "containment".

Book Events

Death of a Science in Russia, edited by Conway Zerkle. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press. \$3.75. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

This is a documentary history of the great Russian genetics controversy, as the result of which the triumphant agronomist, Trofim Dennisovich Lysenko, has been elevated to a place beside Apollonius of Tyre and the Count Cagliostro among the famous charlatans. The roots of the dispute of course go deep into Marxist ideology. Marx had made much use of the Darwinian doctrines of evolution by progressive adaptation in his development of the theory of the class struggle, although the notion of natural selection, as far as it relates to man, had to be rejected by Engels because of its obvious conflict with the concept of the classless society as the goal of historical evolution. But it is logically implicit in the whole Communist philosophy that environment must be the determining factor in human biological development.

The Lamarckian and Darwinian notions of heredity were largely discredited by the experiments of Gregor Mendel in the gardens of his Bohemian monastery. Mendel's discoveries, although published in 1865, did not become generally known until nearly fifty years later when they were independently confirmed by other investigators. Since the ratios established by Mendel for the reappearance of dominant and recessive traits in offspring had been established empirically, they became the accepted doctrine and out of them the whole science of genetics has evolved. In the early 1920s, however, the doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics was revived by reports of the experiments of a Viennese zoologist, Paul Kammerer. Kammerer claimed that by breeding spotted oviparous salamanders against dark background he had caused them to acquire the coloration and sexual habits of the viviparous black salamanders, and had induced similar changes in certain species of toads. These announcements were received with great enthusiasm by Marxists everywhere and Kammerer became a hero in Bolshevik Russia. But when he was openly accused by other scientists, who had examined his specimen, of having contrived the allegedly biological changes of pigmentation by the aid of India ink, Kammerer committed suicide.

Professor Zerkle thinks that except for the exposure of Kammerer the science of genetics might have been proscribed in Russia long before it was. For a time, however, it was even encouraged, and the famous geneticist Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov was placed in charge of the vast agricultural experimental program. Lysenko, an obscure official of an agricultural station, first came to prominence in 1929, as the result of a report on the vernalization of wheat. Presently, in collusion with a dialectician named Prezent, he began a noisy attack in the Soviet scientific journals on the heresy of "Mendelian-Morganism". Among other things Lysenko and Prezent sought to establish a relationship between genetics and the Nazi race theories. They also asserted that Vavilov's doctrines and methods had prevented many improvements that would have been possible by Darwinian-Marxist methods. In 1936 a scientific congress met at Moscow to consider the controversy. Gradually it became obvious that the question had already been decided by high political authority and that Vavilov was doomed. In 1939 he was not permitted to attend the International Congress of Genetics at Edinburgh, although he had been elected as its president. He was arrested in the following year, and is believed to have died in 1942 in the Siberian slave camp of the gold mining trust. Meanwhile Lysenko had succeeded to his job. Lysenko's power and prestige in Russia, in Professor Zerkle's opinion, are due wholly to the fact that he is given credit by superstitious politicians for the great improvements in Russian agriculture made possible by Vavilov's long and patient experiments.

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By Bertrand de Jouvenel

PARIS -- December, 1949

THE STATE OF EUROPE: Four and a half years after the end of the war, Western Europe can celebrate Christmas in freedom and relative plenty. It would not have been so but for American help and comfort. Had the great Republic disinterested itself of our affairs not only would our material condition be different but we might well be suffering the same oppression as our Eastern neighbors. There is ample occasion for gratitude on our part, and for pride of achievement on the part of our American friends.

There is, however, no immediate prospect of Western Europe standing as a solid, independent, equal partner by the side of the United States to share the responsibility for the material preservation of our civilization. This to Americans is disappointing, aggravating. To Europeans it is alarming.

No European in his right senses is content to lean upon the United States. Not only does it saddle them with an unfair burden but it is unsafe. It is unsafe in a general sense because our continuing need for assistance may injure our relationship: it must, in the nature of things, induce exasperated Americans to try to "put things right" and cause reactions of national pride in our countries which resent their fall from their former high estate and are quick to take offense. It is unsafe in a more immediate sense because our peril is so near and assistance must come from so far. No will and force from across the Atlantic can preserve us from destruction: there must be a will and force in Europe.

Why is there none? Why is it that Western Europe, with its great mass of population, offers no solidity? Why is it that its nations, the first-born of Western civilization, only yesterday world powers, seem today, with the sole exception of England, to be foreordained victims? These are the questions I shall try to answer.

* * *

MENACE FROM THE EAST: A menace from the East is no new thing in European history. As a small cape of Asia, Europe has been called upon on many occasions to fight off invasion or contain pressures from the East. We are not without experience in this business. However, it is important to note that such experience was centered in Eastern capitals and is foreign to the main capitals of Western Europe such as London and Paris. These latter quite possibly grew up as the exemplars of European civilization precisely because they never had to deal with the Eastern menace, attended to from other seats of power.

Polish and Hungarian tradition comprise far more terrifying pictures than are to be found in the French and English tradition. The former nations had to contend with ruthless heathen foes who respected but understood nothing of Western values. While the French and English only fought each other, the Spaniard and the German, up to our latest experience, behaved in a predictable, civilized manner.

As a consequence of the protection it has been afforded over the centuries by Eastern Europe, our West has developed habits and traits which prove inadequate to our present position. If you will follow on a series of historical maps the evolution of European frontiers, say in the last seven hundred years, you will be struck by the fact that Western Europe hardened quite early into frontiers which have suffered no major alterations. There was no great swoop to shatter them, and the nations could achieve a high degree of individuality. It was not so in the East where the map underwent enormous alterations, the Western forces being regrouped time and again according to the direction of the menace and the origin of the leadership afforded.

Between the anciently fixed nations of the West, rivalry has become a deeply rooted habit. While very recent memories sufficiently explain French distrust of Germany, it is characteristic that on the slightest provocation jealousy of England flares up; however much we owe her.

Another important consequence of this European in-fighting is pacifism. If you have never fought wars with others than neighbors similar to yourselves, leading the same lives, accepting the same principles, respecters of women, of personal liberty and of property, who in short do not propose to destroy your family or society, all this fighting must come to seem silly. Nobody stands to gain anything by it, and war can only arise out of irrational excitement and a mistaken sense of honor. It may then, and it should, be avoided by self-control and willingness to talk things over and settle them peacefully. This feeling was strongly held in the late Twenties, when World War I was represented as a disastrous slip which clearer and cooler heads might have avoided. Such was quite probably the case. It is fantastic, however, that this conception of war should still be hovering in the air. Surely few pacifists would contemplate with equanimity the fate which has overtaken the subjected nations of Eastern Europe, and our foretaste should be a sufficient warning that not war but subjection is the great evil we must guard against. It is noticeable, however, that many Western Europeans, dreading to face the reality of today, hug the notion that somehow "unwarlikeness" can save them from war instead of thinking of what can save them from subjection.

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LIGHT FROM THE EAST: Though Western Europe is by tradition unprepared to face the Eastern menace, yet it might rise to the occasion were it not confused by the bearing of a Western standard in the Russian hands. Russia has always been a barbarian country with Western creeds superimposed upon it. First, it was Greek Christianity, then, with Catherine the Great, Eighteenth Century philosophy and latterly Marxism. Voltaire could applaud Catherine the Great's marching into Poland because it was done, as he believed, in the name of philosophy. "It is", he wrote, "the Semiramis of the North who is making fifty thousand men march into Poland to establish there toleration and liberty of conscience. . . . I am proud of being somewhat in her good graces. I am well aware that a few trifling offenses are imputed to her on the subject of her husband [whom she had caused to be murdered] but those are family matters in which I do not concern myself."

Such is today the outlook of all too many intellectuals in Western Europe, the case being infinitely worse. To them the great Eastern Power is bringing to fruition the supreme manifestation of Western secular thought, Marxism. To them the transformation to be achieved is so desirable that they share the Webbs' blithe indifference to its brutality. Did not Hegel teach that the wheels of History must run in blood?

It is to be stressed that the wide popular following of Stalinism in Continental Western Europe is wholly to be traced to its intellectual adherents. The Communist parties are quite right to cherish and cosset their intellectuals, for these stand guaranty to the people that this is the way of progress. The people of Western Europe have a touching faith in the intellectuals and chiefly in the scientists who assume the ancient function of the priest.

And here is a striking chain of consequences. While many of the people believe in Stalinism because devoted intellectuals guarantee it as the next step in progress, many other intellectuals smile upon Stalinism because it is the thing the people believe in. There is a sincere yearning among the intellectuals of Western Europe for "communion with the people". This was achieved during the Occupation. And now there are not a few who fear to cut themselves adrift from the people if they offend the people's belief in Stalinism.

It may seem queer that David Rousset should have "discovered" Russian concentration camps this last month when most everyone knew that the Germans had learned the recipe from the Soviets. It is nonetheless important and credit should be given for what must have been quite an ordeal: the tearing oneself away and the barring oneself from popular audiences and companies likeable in themselves and whose beliefs one tried to share out of affection.

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THE SHADOW OF GOEBBELS: Powerful negative reasons preclude leaders of European opinion from addressing it vigorously on the subject of the Eastern menace. They are (1) the unpleasantness of following in the footsteps of Goebbels, and (2) the fear of becoming a champion of "American capitalism".

Only a few years ago we could see on the walls of Paris huge posters showing files of armed men arising from the various lands of Continental Europe and trooping together as the army of Europe to fight the Russian peril. These posters said something like: "Europeans arise to save Europe!" Now there is no doubt at all that Hitler's folly was Stalin's opportunity. No reasonable man would deny that Hitler is responsible for the present menace. He it was who quickened Moscow's appetite by calling in Stalin as an accomplice and offering him the Balt States, half of Poland and a free hand in Finland. He it was who aroused Russian patriotism by his aggression of 1941. He it was who by his clumsy attempts to attain a separate peace with Russia induced the Western leaders to consent to the fatal concessions of Yalta. He it was who made a fight to a finish inevitable, who buried himself under the ruins of Eastern Europe and left the weakened West unprotected for the first time in centuries. And so in facing the Soviet menace we are in fact facing up to Hitler's work. Nonetheless it is quite uncomfortable to speak the language of the Goebbels poster.

There are quite a number of European intellectuals who meet this difficulty by "fighting on two fronts", denouncing Stalinism and American capitalism. This is mostly escapism: and a very bad escape it is. For thus they are, unconsciously, even better pupils of Goebbels! Bolshevism and Pluto-Democracy were his twin targets. Germany was to save the world from both!

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TROUBLED MINDS: "What stand is a man to take", a friend asked me, "when he is a democrat who hates the NKVD, a champion of the workers whose main unions are Communist, a pacifist who hates war and an antimilitarist who objects to armaments, last but not least a Socialist who is committed to fight capitalism? While denouncing the Soviet Police State, must he not be careful not to estrange himself from the workers led by Communists? While inveighing against Soviet imperialism must he not beware of American capitalism which seizes this opportunity to reconvert Western Europe away from Socialism? Must he not protest against the building up of a European military force auxiliary to American imperialism? While advocating European union, must he not demand that it be a Socialist Europe, which unfortunately the foremost Socialist party in Europe, the British, does not seem over-eager to achieve?"

In this telling statement, three prejudices stand out: one is the prejudice against defense as such, unfortunately out of place in circumstances which have suffered great deterioration. The second is the equation of the United States with Big Business, and of Big Business with exploitation. The third is the equation of Socialism with improvement of the condition of the people. It has to be endlessly restated that Pierpont Morgan is not President of the United States, that the American worker's standard of life is the highest in the world, that there is less class distinction in America than in any of our countries. All this however is not very effective because it does not reach down to the fundamental preoccupation.

Deep down in the "unconscious" of the European mind -- much though I dislike the term -- there is an unstated feeling which plays an important role, a will not

to be bested by the Americans, the "younger sons". The "American way of life" is something at which they are better than we are or can be. On the other hand "the Russian way" is something at which we might best the Russians. Moreover the "American way", some would say, is nothing new; they think of it as something that was spoken of in the late Eighteenth Century. The "Russian way" is a newer idea which came to light in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. I do not want to overstate the importance of such vague but effective feelings. They are of limited but real importance with the class to whom it falls to shape opinion.

A political leadership and officialdom reared in the tradition of national rivalries and attuned to them; an intellectual leadership anxious to be in the van of progress and prone to regard the "American idea" as belonging rather in the past, however strange this may seem to the American reader; and finally a business leadership clinging busily to the sheltered monopolistic situations derived from national protectionism and these perfected forms of protection being achieved in the semi-corporative, semi-socialistic state -- these are the handicaps Western Europe has to overcome. The task is far from impossible of achievement. All that is needed is that Europe should rediscover Liberty as the great explosive revolutionary force that it is and as man's most cherished and honorable possession.

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FRANCE AND GERMANY: Here is an excerpt, literally translated, from a recent private conversation of four Parisians on Germany.

A:- Foreign Minister Schuman has given in completely to the Americans. He has betrayed our national interest. Germany is recovering, the lesson of two World Wars unheeded. The Americans are repeating the same mistake as last time, rebuilding the enemy, and again we have no strong leader to stand up to them and prevent the menacing restoration of Germany.

B:- We obtained some face-saving concessions which do not contradict but merely retard the American policy on Germany. As our only successes lie in delaying, it is doubtful whether they are profitable to the common weal of the West. For surely if we are ultimately to rebuild Germany, as it seems, then it is better to do it with a good grace. As we are not in a position to make another policy prevail I think our delaying action only handicaps the American policy.

C:- Besides I would say that the policy of rebuilding Germany is really to our interest, for do we not need a barrier between us and Russia? And if Germany were to be permanently kept decentralized and demilitarized, wouldn't it mean that we would be permanently open to Russia?

A:- In short you agree to the rebuilding of Germany either because it cannot be helped or because it seems to you desirable! It hasn't occurred to you that a strong Germany will be an aggressive Germany.

C:- Well, remembering our own history I would say that two defeats coming on top of each other would cure any nation from the adventurous spirit, especially if she is given a chance of a good life and not driven to desperation.

D:- Ah! but then you forget how superior the Congress of Vienna was to that of Potsdam. In 1815, France had made herself a nuisance to Europe for 23 years. The Allies however did not seek to extirpate what must have seemed to them the roots of the trouble.

A:- I distrust Germans as Germans and you may talk your heads off, the French people will be with me every time, with me and with the Communists, since on this point the Right to which I belong and the Communists are agreed.

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